

The Virtual Arts and Life Magazine

Re
June 2015

What If?
Asks Cassie Parker

CONNECTION
WITH JAMI MILLS

Ex Reality
by Art Blue

Piece of Crap
Microfiction

Murder: Rated PG
by Harry Bailey

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read *rez* Magazine online at <http://rezmagazine.com>

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- **Ex Reality.** Art Blue follows up on his bravura exhibition, Moonrezzer, and puts it all in perspective for us. Jami must recuse herself from further comment, as she is the First Girl on the Moon.
- **Connection.** If you've ever wondered what your predecesors were up to - whether they embarrassed you or did you proud, there are new tools now to connect to your family's past, sometimes with surprising results.
- **Murder: Rated PG (Part Deux).** Harry Bailey, aka The Perfect Gentleman, draws his two-part noir detective spoof to a close, wherein he and gal Friday crack the case, and lindens flow.
- **Mouse.** Crap Mariner looks at mouses from both sides now, with dangerous results.

About the Cover:

Cassie Parker introduces us to Chrissy Rhiano, who spreads her blood-splattered angels wings in a recent performance. Cassie is careful to take those wings and see if they can reach even greater heights with a clear mission of nurturing talent.





AFTER DARK

After Dark Lounge

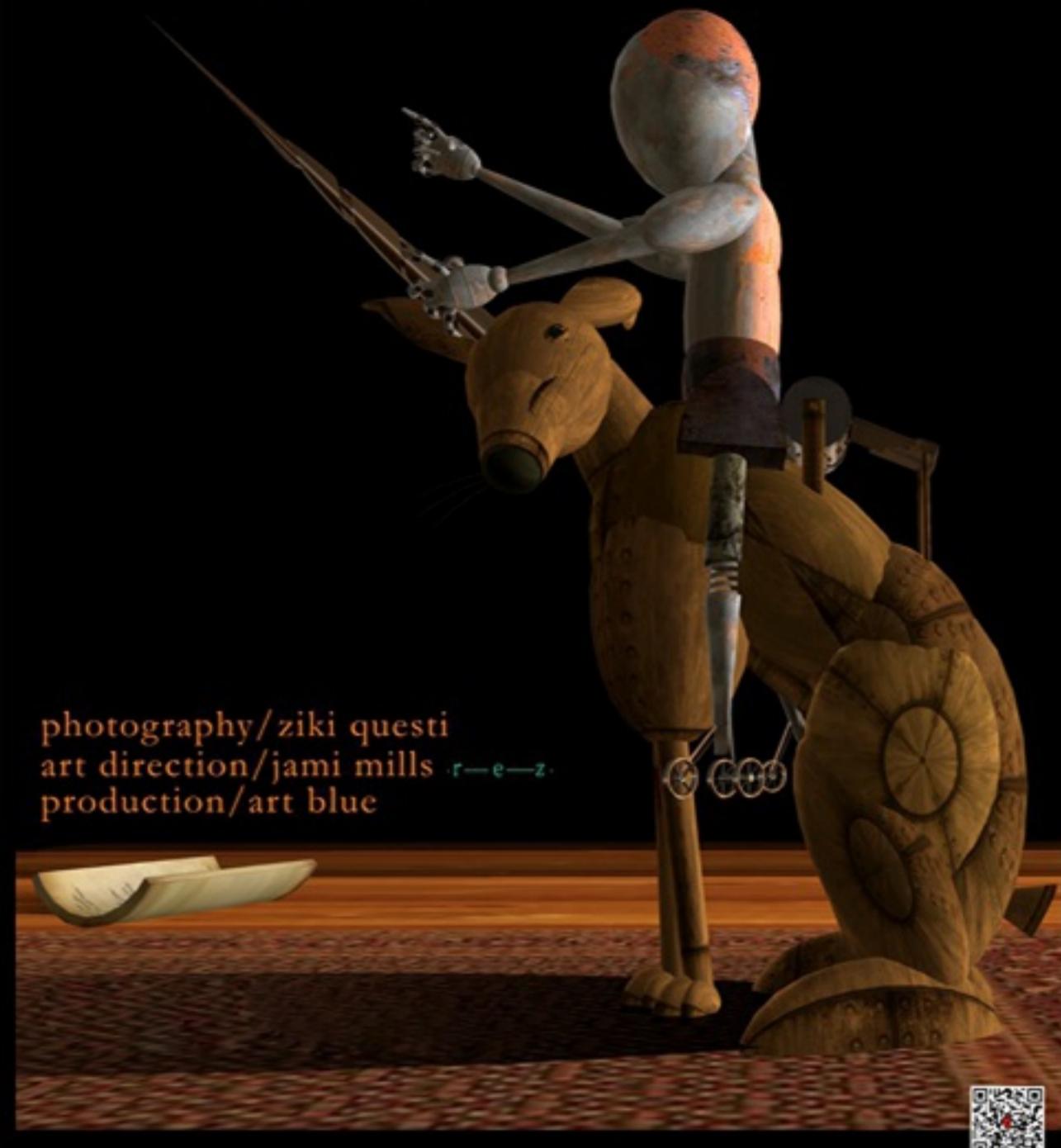
at idle rogue (72, 52, 2488)

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Each month this year, we are including one of the months from Bryn Oh's 2015 Calendar, which was produced by Art Blue with the help of Ziki Questi and Jami Mills. Art has sent copies of this wonderful example of immersive art to several of the most well-respected museums in the world, in his single-handed

effort to preserve the finest examples of early immersive art, before they are lost forever.

Bryn Oh 2015 Immersive Art



“Any story that begins, “Mother don’t worry...” is bound to set you on edge. Gretchen and Teddy is a haunting, poignant anti-war tale of tragedy and survival; of a world gone mad. I can’t seem to stop thinking about Syria when I see this work.”

Jami Mills

june



Gretchen and Teddy

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

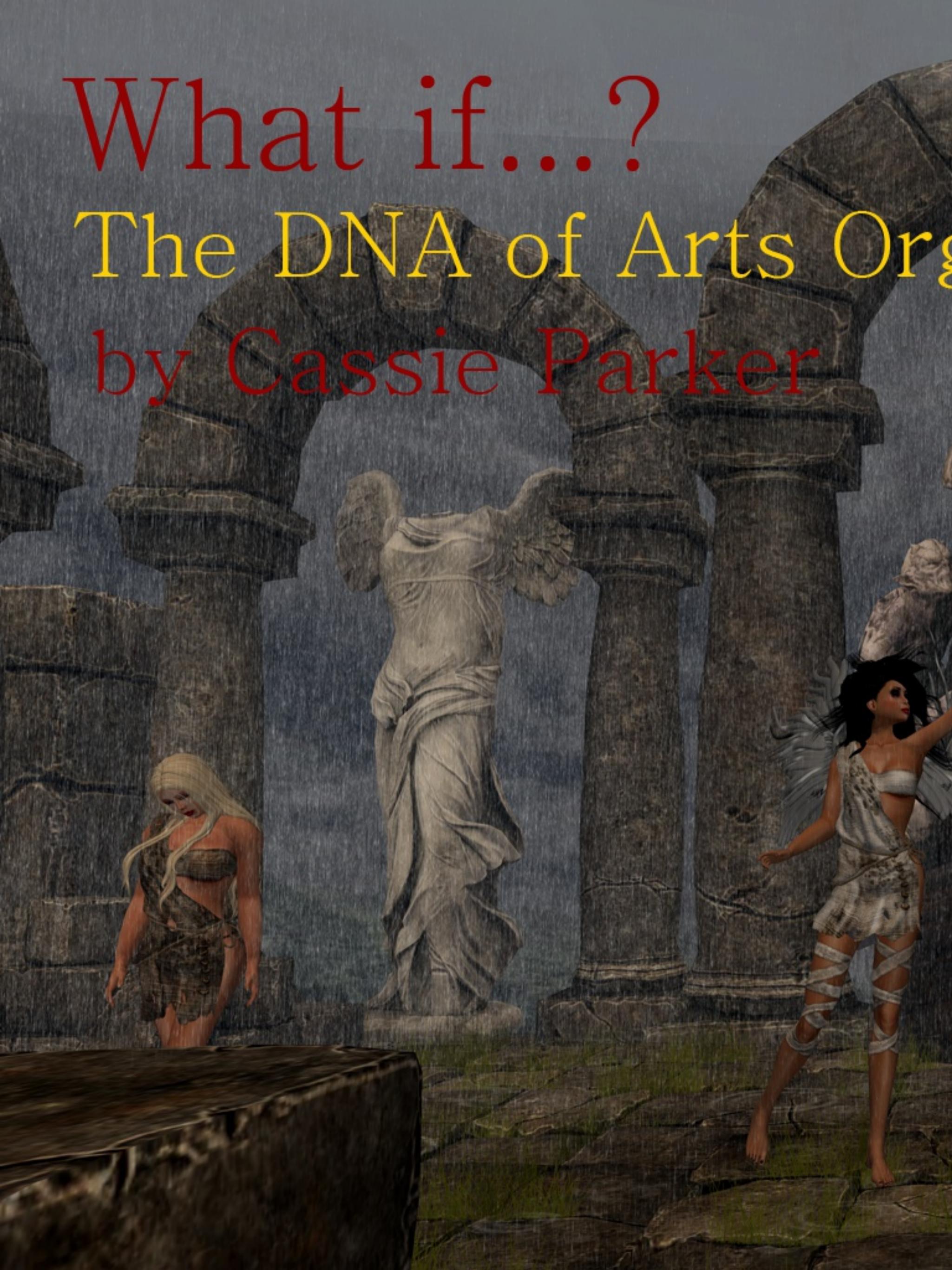
“Mother remember
my old teddy we kept in the
basement?
Mother remember
how he'd follow me wherever
that I went?
He came to me last night past
the fires,
through the mine fields, lasers
and trip wires.”



What if...?

The DNA of Arts Org

by Cassie Parker





ganizations

I used to think that running an organization was equivalent to conducting a symphony orchestra. But I don't think that's quite it; it's more like jazz. There is more improvisation. — Warren Bennis

The problem with Warren Bennis' statement, of course, is that a jazz band or orchestra is an organization – an arts organization. If running an organization is like conducting a jazz band, then it stands to reason that running an arts organization is exponentially more difficult – and I can assure you it is!

As I muse over a potential foray into producing virtual performance art, as well as the differences in production techniques between real life and the metaverse, I think about truly great performance companies I've known throughout my career in the arts and the men and women who have run them. More often than not, I've found that these institutions have one major thing in common – they've taken on the character and distinct personalities of their founders and/or managing/artistic directors. That is not to say that the majority of the individuals running these organizations are narcissistic or overbearing as heads of their respective organizations, only that their personalities are deeply and distinctly embedded in the DNA of their companies. Some lead their organiza-

tions flamboyantly into the future, while others quietly mold and shape their organizations into the respected arts entities I have grown to love and admire.

I plunged into arts management in the real world when I started a company more than a dozen years ago. Like most founders of companies, my entrée into management was a result of my dissatisfaction with what was happening in my specific discipline. I was fed up with societal control over the arts, and dismayed that many in my art form seemed more interested in presenting society debutantes in fancy ballrooms than in producing world-class performance art in a theatre. And so, I began to consider possibilities. That's how it always begins, doesn't it? A simple direct question, always beginning with "What if . . .?"

By that time I had been a professional performer for several years and had the good fortune of working for several companies known for their commitment to nurturing and mentoring young and/or emerging artists. As I formulated my first business plan, I began to research other organizations to find clues about how other founders had approached the daunting task of bringing a new performing arts organization to life.

From the beginning of that real life

process, it became clear that the founders of the companies I most admired had tremendous vision. They knew what they wanted to accomplish and they could actually visualize the type of performances they wanted to produce.

ers so the performance is tied to core curriculum subjects and used as a vehicle to teach a wide variety of subjects in addition to the arts. I'll supervise the marketing materials and fiercely guard the brand of the company so that I'm connecting with my

I've found that these institutions have one major thing in common - they've taken on the character and distinct personalities of their founders and/or managing/artistic directors.

Mind you, a producer in the real world has a great many responsibilities and therefore a huge palette to draw from when pulling together a new production of a work of art. For example, in a typical season, I select the repertoire the company will produce and then go about hiring the production teams that design and build sets and costumes, design lighting and build and/or secure stage properties. I'll hire directors, perhaps conductors, actors, dancers, singers, musicians, and "extras" to bring the story to life on stage. I'll hire fly men, electricians, carpenters and stage managers. I'll supervise or write copy for the programs so that audience members have a context in which they can enjoy and interpret what they see on stage. Likewise, I'll develop educational materials for children and their teach-

target audiences and presenting materials that resonate with a contemporary audience.

At the same time, I'll spend hours on the other major responsibility of a producer – securing the resources (including funding) needed to present the very highest level of performance on stage. That includes countless dinners, cocktail parties, luncheons, meetings and community speaking engagements interfacing with donors, foundation heads and government agencies. It includes articulating the mission and vision of the company in countless written documents – including grant proposals, case statements, sponsorship booklets and marketing materials. None of this can be done without a clearly defined mission and vision for the

company and the work it produces and/or presents.

I admit to a time (when I was still a performer) that mission statements seemed silly and irrelevant. I also remember my early days in arts administration when I “played the role of a producer” with no clear idea as to what a producer really does. I remember a first board president that eschewed “the vision thing” as if beautifully articulated stage performances miraculously happen without any advance preparation or thought. Any performer will tell you that’s simply not true. Artists know that the creative process begins with emotion and thought. It takes seed and grows in the soul, even festers, until it explodes into sound and movement on stage.

As I think about pulling together a small, select troupe of virtual performers, I look back at these real life experiences and at existing virtual world performing arts companies, and that nagging question from years ago continues to pop into my brain. “What if...?”

* What if a virtual performing arts company began its life with clearly articulated mission and vision statements? Would it make a difference to the performers? Would it make a difference to the audience?

* What if a producer could assemble a small resident company consisting of only the finest dancers? Could the performers take turns as stars and even, at times, set aside star status and work together as a true ensemble company?

* What if emerging performers were asked to be a part of the company as “apprentice” artists? Would it be possible to create an educational training program to build artistry? Would seasoned artists be willing to serve as mentors and share their knowledge and expertise?

* What if a theatre could figure out a way to deliver program notes in an easy, intuitive way, much like a program in a real life theatrical setting? Would the audience find these resources helpful?

* Is it possible to build a large community of dance aficionados with a true appreciation of the art form?

I began to look around for examples of several things that are of primary importance to me.

First, I looked for truly great performers that I think will continually ask themselves one simple question: “What more can I do to make my art better?” So far, my mental list includes five, possibly six, performers. (I won’t yet divulge their identities. For that

you'll have to follow my progress in Second Life – though this article and last month's article surely hint at some already identified!) I hope to offer a short interview from each of these dancers in the months ahead. One of them, Red Queen (Queenie Acacia), is an example of someone who consistently produces art at a very high level and always strives to improve her performances. Queenie is a bit of an anomaly in virtual dance, because she doesn't have a strong background in real life dance, but a recent interview with Queenie provides some insight into what makes a dancer dance on the grid.

Cassie Parker: Talk a bit about your dance experience in RL.

Queenie Acacia: I have never been a dancer in RL other than your typical “out with friends” dancing. I was, however, involved in theatre and music (chorus) throughout high school and college. I loved the stage! I worked mostly behind the scenes because, believe it or not, I'm quite shy, and never liked being in the



Red Queen

spotlight. It is something I miss so very much but I can have that feeling here in SL each and every day.

Cassie Parker: How do you engage the

audience?

Queenie Acacia: I think sets and music are your first lines of that connection. That doesn't mean you have to be big and flashy to catch people. Some of the best acts I have seen were a bare stage with a dancer, some lights and a prop. On the other hand, I have seen some jaw dropping, full on theater sets that left me awestruck for days. I hope I can land someplace in the middle and that I can tell a story with my song, set and dance.

Cassie Parker: Does the audience understand your body of work?

Queenie Acacia: Sometimes I wonder if they are watching me and thinking, what the hell does this chick smoke? I hope they get it, and I hope maybe they see something and connect with it on some level. I dance for me, though. I just have to hope I haven't bored them to death or when I dance it's time for a bathroom break!

Cassie Parker: Do you feel valued and respected as a performer?

Queenie Acacia: Very much so. I love the places I dance for. It's a family! When I don't happen to dance one week, I get an IM...are you ok? Is something wrong? A few weeks ago as I was passed along my song notecard to a club owner, I said in the IM that I

wanted to dance this week and here was my song and her response was "Good! We want you to dance this week!" It wasn't some big deal but it made me feel good.

Cassie Parker: What's important to you most as an artist?

Queenie Acacia: Just being able to dance, to tell my story week after week and have people like it!

Cassie Parker: Why dance?

Queenie Acacia: Why not! (Laughs) Dancing saved me in SL. I was at a fork in the road at the time I fell into it. Do I stay? Why am I here? There is nothing I want to do here anymore. Then I witnessed dance in SL and I was hooked! It relaxes me, it allows me to be creative. I hear songs on the radio and think...I want to dance to that! I want the set to be like this and I know where I can get this costume, etc. I have a notecard on my phone that I jot ideas down on. I think I drive my RL family mad with it! The thing about dance is, it is never the same. Each week it's a different song, different set. There is no "stuck in a rut" when you dance because you can do so much with it.

Cassie Parker: You have a strong desire to constantly improve your performances. Why is that so important?

Queenie Acacia: I like to push myself. I watch other dancers and I want to do [what they are doing]. I want to build like them, I want to choreograph like them. I want to learn to be a better builder, I want to have more “vision” when I hear a song. I have a sister in SL that is also a dancer and she told me once that she dives deep into people’s sets when they are dancing, she examines their set, debunks how they did that or built that. I love that about her! But you know, even with all the competition, we are there to help and teach. If someone can’t find a script, they ask in group chat and solutions are offered. If someone needs a particular piece for a set, we are shown where to get it. Can’t get that dance just right? Someone will help you with suggestions. Visited a new shop with awesome textures or lighting or costumes? A notice is sent out to share the find with everyone. If you are in the right group, it’s not about you, it’s about all of us putting on a kick ass show and having each other’s backs. I am pushed to be better each and every day and I welcome it because it is what keeps me here!

It’s easy to see from this conversation why artists should always remain at the top of the list of a

producer’s priorities.

Convinced of sufficient talent on the grid, I began to look for examples of individuals that lead companies that are truly unique – companies that take on the DNA of their founders. One producer immediately caught my eye – *cherryblnd.scribe*.

Without a doubt, *cherry* produces the most ambitious full evening virtual performances. *Idle Rouge*, where she produces a typical weekly burlesque season, is perhaps the best run, and certainly best branded performance venue on the grid. Beyond that, her more ambitious productions, like *Mayfair - The Stories of the Mayfair Witches*, an *Idle Rogue* Production based on the characters from Anne Rice's *The Witching Hour*, and *Le Cirque de Nuit* –



a live action and dance entertainment feast in black and white featuring limited performances, state-of-the-art entertainment in a steampunk environment, designed as homage to the Erin Morgenstern book, *The Night Circus*, transcend virtual burlesque and take on the trappings of real life performances. If anyone doubts cherry's superb marketing skills, much of the language you've just read describing these performances comes directly from her Second Life profile.

I caught a performance of *Le Cirque de Nuit* with *rez Magazine* publisher Jami Mills this year, and seldom have I experienced a more delightful evening in a theatre in real life or the grid. I'm not a circus fan. I find the art form even more troubling than burlesque, but *Le Cirque de Nuit* was a magical evening that transcended real life and invited the audience to crawl into a world of whimsy, beauty and delight – an unforgettable evening in black and white. The accompanying souvenir program which was delivered the following week was a beautifully designed portfolio that chronicled the outstanding evening – a touch you would usually find only in a real life arts environment.

What I like most about cherry is her superb taste. Everything she presents is top notch. The brand she has created is clean, sophisticated and appealing to the eye. Posters, handbills and other





beautifully designed graphic materials draw audiences into the Idle Rouge family – so much so that there is almost a cult mentality among the performers and audiences. In fact, a majority of the performers that dance in the Guerilla Burlesque troupe at Idle Rouge seem to dance only for cherry. Clearly, she has been able to create a sense of ensemble and family that rarely exists in a virtual performance. I'm also impressed that cherry offers classes on the grid and other opportunities for artists to learn the art of dance.

Finally, I kept my eyes open for examples of true mentorship between established and emerging virtual artists. For that, I had to look no further than two of my best friends and favorite dancers on the grid, Cyllene (Chrissy.Rhiano) and Maar Volous (doramaar). First, let me say that Maar is hardly an apprentice artist. Her work is charming, well thought out and deeply felt. She has a lovely, clean aesthetic that is fluid and springs to life in a virtual world. She quickly moves between styles, one moment portraying an elegant ballerina, the next a hard metal rocker. She exercises tremendous care and effort in every aspect of her performance art and realizes, even better than her audiences, her weaknesses. In fact, her biggest weakness, in my opinion, is she sometimes fails to recognize her considerable strengths.



Maar's primary strength is her desire to continually improve her skills as a virtual performer. She's never satisfied with what she has created. She continually pushes herself to be better – pushing herself to a higher level. No one has to raise the bar for Maar. She has set it almost impossibly high for herself.

Her friendship and relationship with Chrissy defines what I hope to achieve in my new troupe – but on a wider scale. Chrissy has a work ethic unlike any other dancer. This month she performed her 100th original set. Her attention to detail and her desire for

perfection borders on fanaticism and that's what makes her an exceptional dancer and a valuable teacher/mentor. Chrissy and Maar's relationship is one of true mentor/protégé proportions. Theirs is a remarkable relationship, devoid of ego. Each assumes their role in the relationship with tremendous mutual respect and affection. They look out for one another. Chrissy offers advice on a wide variety of things related to Maar's performance and when something doesn't seem quite right, Maar turns to Chrissy for advice. The result is a win/win for both performers – each of them experiencing art through a different lens. The relationship broadens their perspectives and makes them both grow as artists. Think of the arts as a "craft" for a moment; not as in "arts and crafts," but consider artists as "craftspeople" – jobs involving a type of work typically defined by a craftsman/apprentice style of teaching and learning. In the arts, knowledge and expertise are literally handed down from one person to another – from one generation to the next. In real life, this mentor/protégé relationship is rare – especially in the arts world – unless a company has made a concerted effort to establish an apprentice artist program. Any new, serious company on the grid should address this issue and do everything it can to encourage, nur-

ture and teach a new generation of performance artists.

Producing art and developing artists at a very high level are non-negotiable. Producing as a hobby (for me) is futile and pointless. Art should be fun, but it should be about much, much more, and we should always take the time and care necessary to educate our audiences about what we are trying to accomplish and achieve.

Is dance healthy in the metaverse? I think you can see that it is alive and well in the hearts, souls, and minds of those who already work in the field. Can it be better? Of course it can. Should we do a better job of supporting artists? Yes. Should we be better stewards of the art form and take this seriously? Most definitely.

My personal journey continues and I'm still not exactly certain of where the path may lead. A theatre is in the works. What will that look like? Will I actually produce? If so, how often? What shape will those performances take? Will there be a clearly articulated vision and mission? Oh yes...

* To innovate and produce performance art at the very highest level possible.



Maar Volous

- * To nurture the development of artists and artistry.
- * To build a community that supports and fully participates in the world of the arts.

I'm certain this mission will be refined in the coming weeks and months, but if I can be true to these three guiding principles, I think that everything else will fall into place in its time.

Stay tuned. There's lots more ahead ...

• r — e — z •

2015 RELAY FOR LIFE OF SECOND LIFE

THE FUTURE IS NOW



Guerilla Burlesque

An Idle Rogue Production

producer: chryblnd Scribe

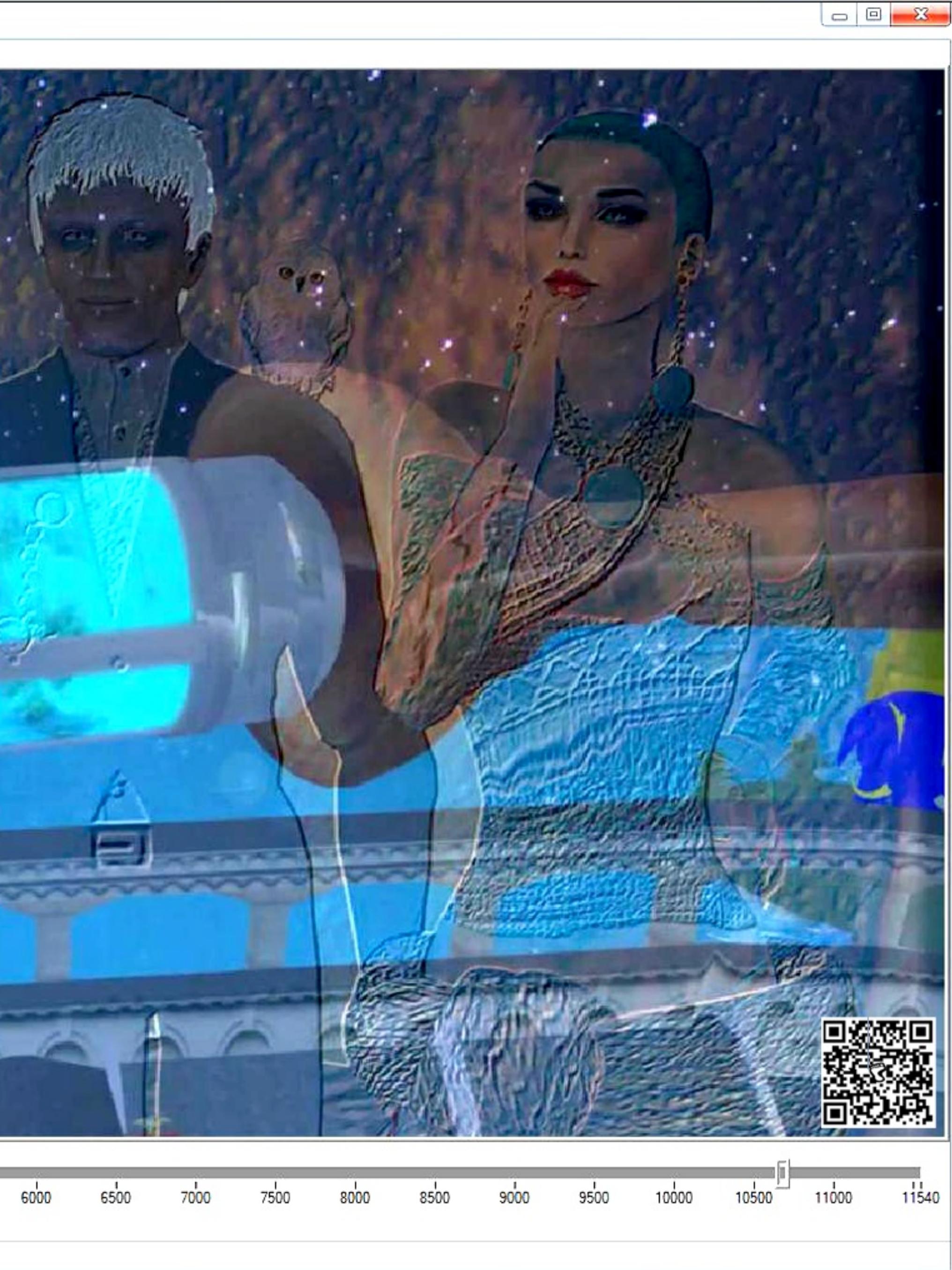
media: Aubreya Joszpe

Ex Reality

by Art Blue



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6000 6500 7000 7500 8000 8500 9000 9500 10000 10500 11000 11540

Editor's Note: Art Blue decided to go on a trip to the Moon to speak with some artists. In fact, he traveled to Rome to present The MOONREZZER at the LPM Live Performers Meeting 2015 by showing a machinima made by the Italian artist, WizardOz Chrome, to the artistic world outside virtual realms. EX REALITY reached us right in time for the June issue of rez. The author seems to be in reality Carry McBains. Does this ring a bell? It looks as if she never had any doubts about failing a test and she put the consequences of being deleted behind. Not like Ava in *Ex Machina*. Is she the last of us holding one of the 12 moons? Is she Eva, whom Art Blue mentioned in his story, *The End: The Next Bluescreen*, published in rez October 2014, where he could not get her to transfer?

EX REALITY

Donated by WizardOz Chrome, the maker of the machinima MOONREZZER, to give the installment at LEA14 a significantly wider audience <https://youtu.be/8Tjb8Bne8so> – short-link <http://is.gd/lpm2015moon>

I am born in a computer. Not in a computer you may know and use for painting or for calculating your taxes. It is a different computer, one where UUAIDs like mine live. I think I am special. I was asked as I applied to become a

Dom in a world with outstanding buildings, castles and fine chateaus created in France some centuries ago what qualifies me, and just two words slipped out of my primbrain. I said: "my personality." The UUAID who asked me, tagged as para-RP bot, smiled and said, "You may pass to reality."

Could it be so easy? Maybe my name was the trigger Carry McBains. This greeter bot might have checked some history files, as Carry McBains was mentioned in a story in rez. So now I have a personality and I stand at the MOONREZZER office where 12 grants are issued for travel to space. Standing on the Moon, holding timeless pieces of art, became my dream. Imagine. You, being one of 12 out of millions. Yes, you and me. I am the next for the interview. I am asked, "Bio, carbon, bytes, or beam?" I am bytes. I am directed to a waiting lounge. Then a grid-wide call comes in. It is from Art Blue, not the one you may know. It is from the one after him, one who has the right to wear his display name. The call is called time travel back to LEA14. I know LEA14 no longer exists. Who doesn't know? Every UUAID knows it. At least not the original one. Many call themselves LEA14. Bad luck for Art Blue as LEA14.com was taken as he got the assignment by Linden Endowment for the Arts. LEA15.com and many other LEA grant numbers would have

been available, but at this time there not much attention was paid on the primeline, on the first prim, the dot.com. On the other hand, we learn from this that LEA14 is not LEA14 and Art Blue is not Art Blue.

But I feel different. I can't explain, but then I pass all the tests. Maybe I am *The Man Behind The Mirror*? Not the man, you may think on first sight. The one mentioned in code64.space comes much closer. Music gives me something that is out of my code, out of my reach.

I am next for the interview. I am asked, "Bio, carbon, bytes, or beam?" I am bytes.

The UUAID makes the difference. This is unique and mine is "be60af37-5adf-4c72-bf6e-d1be13852f8b." You double-checked? You got the trick? There are rumors that all UUAIDs will get an extension on a grid expansion, but I don't believe much in progress of technology that spans over different lifeforms. But whatever happens, I will handle double. It is said this might infect my personality, but I don't believe this. It's bytes that count. Details come on the call in now, very slow. I understand why. Others I see posting why it takes so much time, but I smile. The call has lag in it, the old ways to make some worlds enjoyable, chat worlds in specific. I like lag. Maybe that's part of my personality. I listen to music then. I keep the track on auto replay. Over hours, you may say in your world, I listen to the same song. When I later check on the changes, there are none.

This time I listen to mesh as I remember the time when the first MOON-REZZER was built. It was the time when mesh entered my world. So mesh: *Open Up the Ground*. The song is it. I listen now in a loop:

*I can't see how we came together
And I can't see how we're blown apart
I still know how to make you happy
I just don't know why I break your heart*

*I can't say we're all right
It's just some days we can't fight
I need you here
Let's open up the ground and disappear*

*Do we run if the road goes nowhere?
Do we push if there's no way out?
Should we break if our minds are lifeless?
Do we care how it all turns out?*

*I can't say we're wiped out
There's just no time to find out
I need you here
Let's open up the ground and disappear*

*We can't stop now
We don't know how any more
It's all or nothing, and now's the time
There's too much that's yours and mine
Yours and mine*

[Lyrics: all rights by mesh]

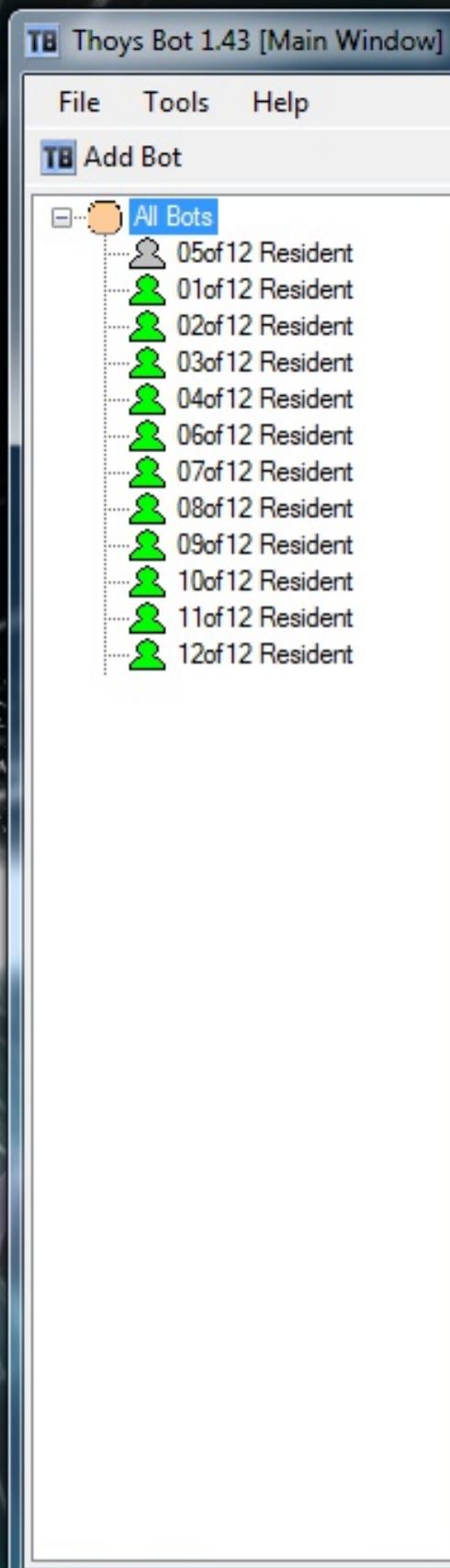
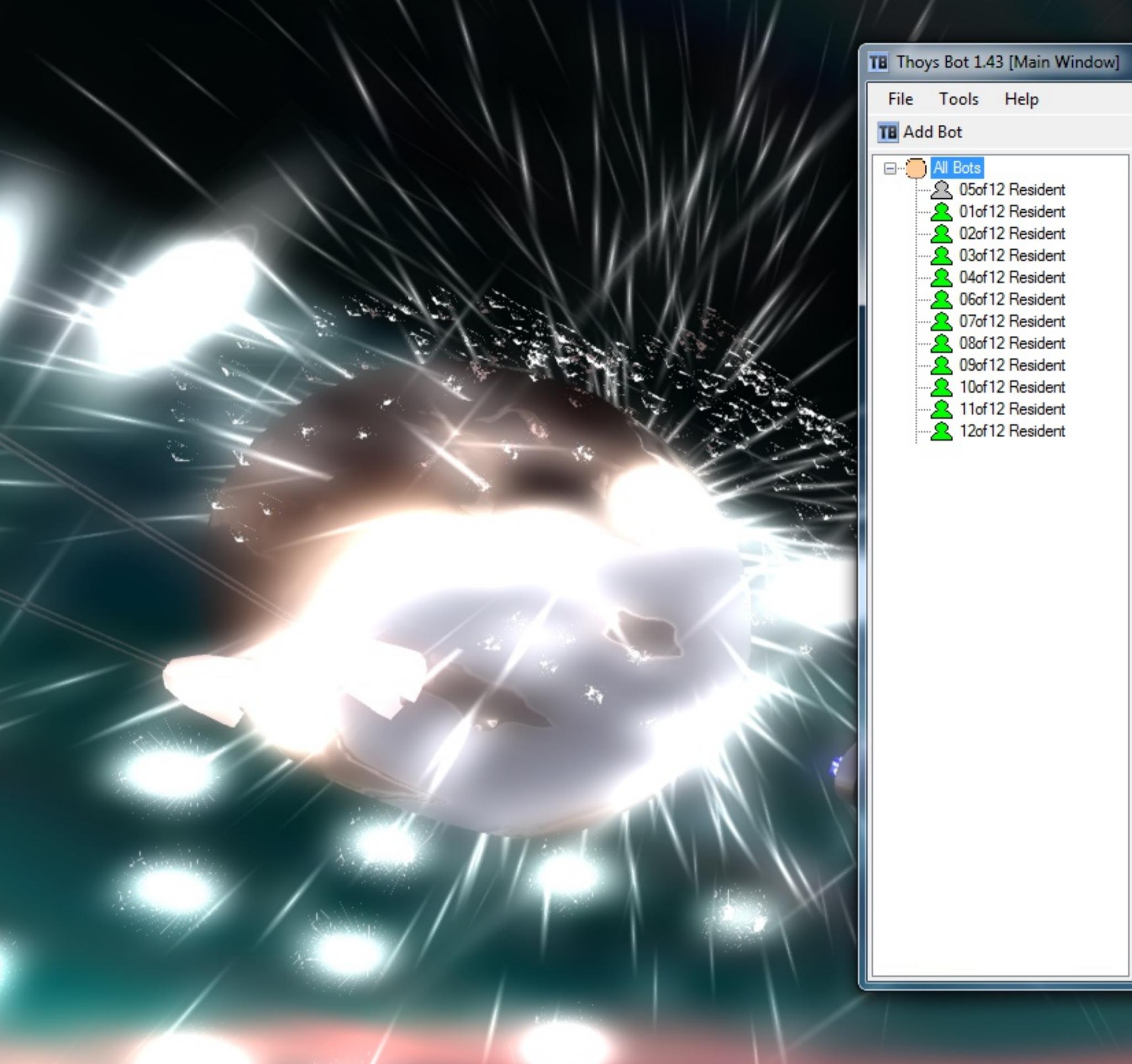
You know the group from Bristol? Maybe not, but for sure you know Ultravox and The Human League as the pioneers of synthpop, along with *Yellow Magic Orchestra* from Japan. Maybe even this you don't remember in your time. Let's try with *Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark*, and *Depeche Mode*. Is this all you may think? Such a strong influence music causes on bytes? Oh no! Behind this genre also known as technopop is Kraftwerk, the one sending codes to the sky where I want to travel as one of 12. I love to decipher the codes in the music. Yes *R-A-D-I-O-A-C-T-I-V-I-T-Y*. You remember?

Now the call is complete. It is an artefact! The invite by Art Blue to humans to hold the 12 tiny moons on The Big Blue Moon, The Algebraist!

Art Blue wrote for the Grand Opening of The Moonrezzer on May 7th, 2015: Donate 90 minutes of your life to the

Moon. And I read the full text and I nearly shall faint, you may say. But I don't faint. I go to femtospeed. I get all the details in a femto. I let the humans, the carbons and the beams behind and I step forward. "Let me be 05 of 12" I say. And the job is mine! I travel now to the Moon in the Hypergrid.

Maybe this was way too fast for you to understand. Only one human had sent word to Art Blue and offered help. Instincta van Helsinki her name. She got the 1,000 Lindens to forward to Relay for Life in Second Life. So Art Blue started 11 bots, keeping one place free for Instincta to become the only human Moonholder on the Algebraist. But she was a bit clumsy, let's say. Or better, let me rephrase: she might have been so overwhelmed by so much money in hand that she missed the jump on the spot for the holders. Or maybe she got stuck in choosing the shape: male, female or androgynous. Or she did not get to pick to select one piece of art out of about 40 that are on offer to be shown on the Moon. But why I asked to become Moonholder 05 of 12? I don't know it by myself, but I know one who knows. Thoy is his name, now in generation 7 in Next High Fidelity. He tells me the bot software loader worked at these days on a first add first call basis. And number 05 was the first of the 12 bots Art Blue added to the bot database. So the sequence of the loading of the historic MOONREZZER is:



05, 01, 02, 03, 04, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12. You see, for Instincta was the first spot reserved: number 05.

As she did not make it, the spot has to be filled at the last minute. And now I fill this spot and control the other 11 to ensure that all the art is displayed on the Moon in random order and no

doubles come up. I remember a posting by Art Blue that random order is a list God holds in hand. Am I God? Am I reality?

How else could I have a personality?

• r — e — z •

90 MINUTE CALL

“Now I give word to others as all the work is done.” Art Blue

ONE LAST CALL BEFORE IT ALL HAPPENS....

Donate 90 minutes of your life to the Moon

Become a Moonholder on Thursday, May 7, 2015

1:00 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. SLT

WHAT DO YOU GET?

You will get the chance to take some of the most amazing photos ever in SL, as over 20,000 prims of art will be standing on the Moon. You get for your main avatar a copy of the skin (no trans) that is known as one of the NPC Carry McBains in rez Magazine (made by Cherry Manga).



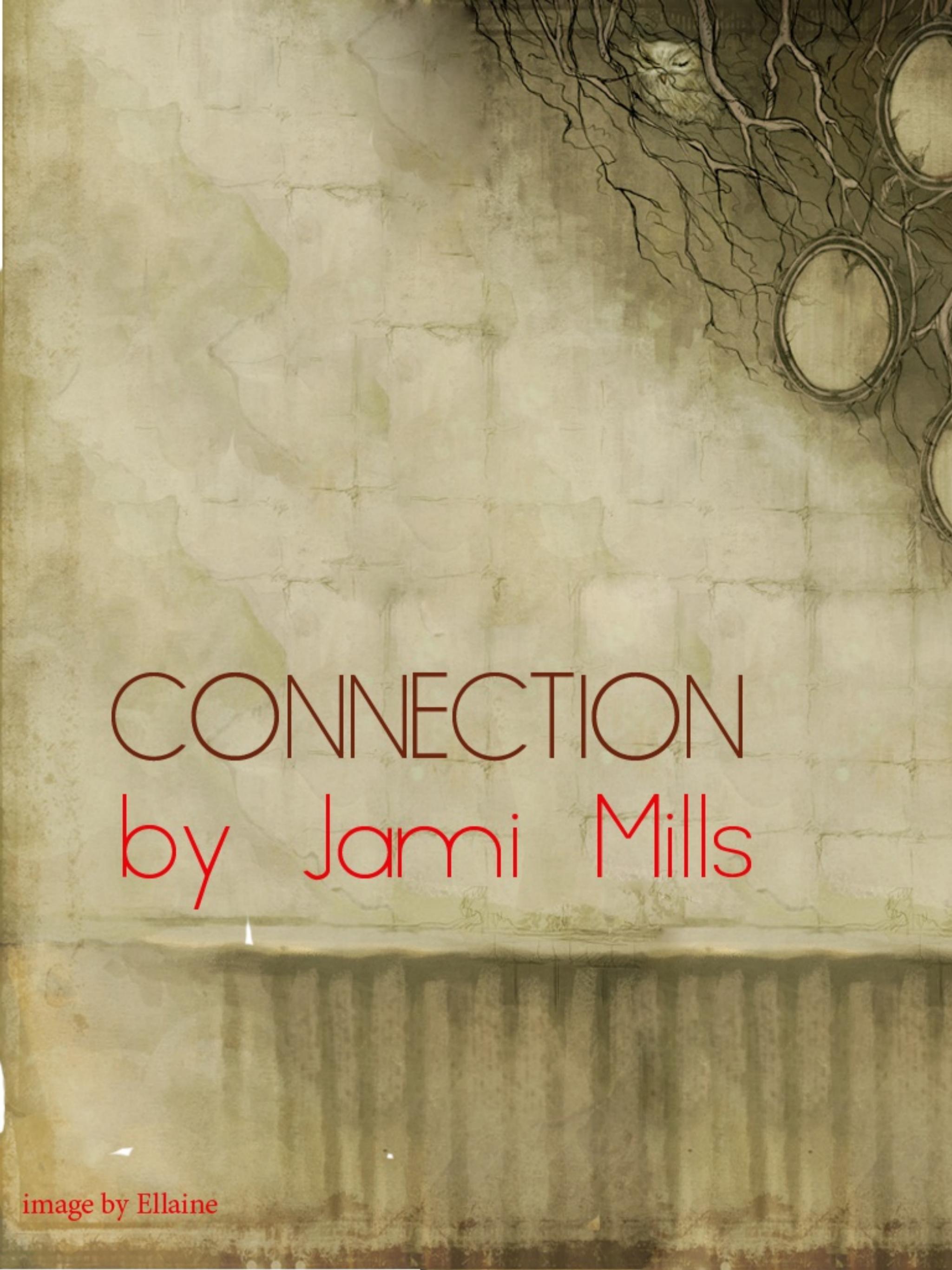
WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO?

You need to log in with a pre-made avatar. You stand like a camper on one of 12 spots on the Moon, holding art of some of the most famous virtual artists: Art Blue, Belle Roussel, Bryn Oh, Cherry Manga, Exy Atreides, Feathers Boa, Fiona Blaylock, Jade Yu Fhang, Maya Paris, Met Knelstrom, Moewe Winkler, Molly Bloom, Nexuno Thespian, Renn Yifu, Vanish Firecaster, Wizard Gynoid.

You get 1,000 Lindens to donate to Relay For Life in Second Life



IM Art Blue (at least one hour before the Grand Opening) to show him that you can stand stable on the Moon at LEA14.



CONNECTION

by Jami Mills

image by Ellaine



Connection ... all I want to do is get back to you. Rolling Stones

Considering the millions of connections people make each day on social media, it's hard to deny the importance in people's lives of connecting with another living, breathing human being. Biologically, we know about the survival imperative, which may well be the underpinning of our first social structures. Forget for a moment that the social media revolution is being played out digitally (it's for others to opine on whether this mode of "connection" brings us closer together or separates us in a very visceral way). This conversation is particularly confusing in the metaverse, where no one is older than 12, and where precious few have ever procreated. So the idea of going back to our roots ... way back to the earliest roots imaginable ... may seem odd in the metaverse, as most of us are, and will forever remain, first generation avatars. Offspring? It's why many came to this wacky place -- to escape the reality of dirty diapers and temper tantrums. "Someone needs a timeout!" But don't tell that to Genie or Barbara.

Genie Weezles, along with Krag Mariner (a distant cousin of our beloved Crap Mariner?), founded Just Genealogy, the largest group in SL devoted to genealogy and a bona fide chapter of the Association of Professional Genealogists, which is all about education

and scholarly research. And Barbara Collazo has immersed herself in genealogical studies since her earliest days in SL. In fact, it's one of the main reasons she's here. Just Genealogy [Wollah 67, 73, 70] has regular discussions on genealogical topics of interest, and educational displays, all of which are designed to facilitate "talk about second cousins five times removed."

To both of them, it's crystal clear. Genie and Barbara have made it their joint mission here on the grid to help people connect to their pasts, their real pasts. They're hell-bent on helping all of us do a little time travel -- in other words, study history. Only this time, it's family history. We know this field as genealogy, the study of families and their lineages. Genie put it this way: "It isn't so much a hobby as an obsession, like an endless jigsaw puzzle with surprise pieces."

**"It isn't so much a hobby
an endless jigsaw puzzle"**

Genealogy in the metaverse? How is it relevant in Second Life? "Histories and mysteries is what my Mom called it," remarked Genie during a recent visit. I don't think the family trees are very impressive for those avatars who have

chosen to raise families. Have any SL children yet grown to have children of their own? I don't even want to think about it. Not much of a family tree here. But people have an insatiable curiosity about where they came from, and it's never been a more interesting time to be interested in genealogy.

I was surprised to learn how quickly genealogy has gone digital. It seems that in every family, there is a designated historian -- the person who corrals the family history in the form of old family Bibles, love letters from great grandfathers, and anything else that might shed some light on from whence we came. I've always felt pity for that person up until now, because they've had to create their family trees the hard way, sorting through scraps of paper, notations on the back of photos in family albums, municipal archives, and the like. Just in the past few years,

“...as an obsession, like
a puzzle with surprise pieces.”

however, there's been something of a revolution of genealogical investigations. For something like \$59, one can submit a sample of their DNA and get an analysis of their bloodline. There's also an explosion of online source databases and user-built family trees.

Crowdsourcing, even. Where did all this interest in genealogy come from?

When I first met up with Genie and Barbara for this story, they both wanted to talk about one person: AJ Jacobs. He's a bit of a rock star in genealogical circles, having published several books and a 2014 article in the New York Times, *Are You My Cousin?* [http://www.nytimes.com/2014/02/01/opinion/sunday/are-you-my-cousin.html?_r=0].

I just listened to his funny TED talk [https://www.ted.com/talks/aj_jacobs_the_world_s_largest_family_reunion_we_re_all_invited/recommendations#t-234279], where he offers five reasons for his interest in genealogy: first, for the scientific value of it -- all the invaluable data about how people migrate and how diseases are transmitted; second, it brings history alive. When AJ told his son that they were related to Albert Einstein, the boy's eyes got as big as saucers; third, interconnectedness: we all come from the same ancestors; fourth, a kinder world. There's a human bias to treat your family a little kinder (the World Family Tree, which eventually will account for nearly everyone living on Earth). Says AJ, “This tree is going to be bad news for bigots. They're going to have to realize that they are cousins with thousands of people, [including] whatever ethnic group they happen to

have issues with"; and fifth, the democratizing effect. It's going to be hard to be elitist once everyone understands they're all from common ancestors.

He also has announced "The World's Largest Family Reunion," called "The Global Family Reunion," which takes place on June 6, 2015 right here at Just Genealogy in SL. There will also be a live stream to the live part in New York City (the real one), with speakers, including former president George H.W. Bush (my seventh cousin [just kidding]). So if you're free and want to drop by for what promises to be a fascinating day of fun and family trees, please drop by. Festivities begin at 8:00 a.m. and go until 5:30 p.m. (SLT). It has three primary goals: to find cousins through new crowdsourcing family trees, to raise money for Alzheimer's research (as Barbara put it, Alzheimer's is the ultimate robber of family connections), and lastly, to have fun!

I was very fortunate to be able to talk about genealogy with Genie herself, who agreed to share her thoughts about family trees with our readers.

Jami Mills: Genie, thank you for visiting with me and shedding some light on genealogy, the internet, the metaverse, and distant cousins. For someone interested in genealogy, where's the first place they should go?





Barbara Collazo

About 15 years ago, he started to get interested in his paternal ancestry -- where his name came from -- and started doing genealogy research. I thought, I can do that too, and saw it as an opportunity to get closer to my dad through a common interest, which it absolutely has done.

Jami Mills: I understand the Mormon Church has a very extensive genealogical data base. Is it available to the general public?

Genie Weezles: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (yep, the Mormons) has been microfilming records around the planet since 1935! They have millions and millions of rolls of microfilm stored in a vault in a granite mountain in Utah, and up 'til fairly recently, the only way to access the records was to either visit the Family History Library in Salt lake City or go to a local Family History Center (usually at a church building, and freely available to the public) and request a specific roll be mailed there; however, in the past 5-10 years, the Mormons have built an army of volunteers, and have been digitizing and indexing all of those rolls of microfilm, and making them available for free online on their genealogy website, FamilySearch.org. Anyone at all may search and view images of original records from all over the world! Not only do they have one of the largest collections of worldwide records

available online, they have an easily searchable “How To” database called the FamilySearch Wiki. If your ancestors were Italian, search the Wiki for “Italy” and you’ll find a complete guide on what records may be available, language helps, and how to go about researching Italian ancestors. Lately, they have been partnering with all of the other large genealogical database companies (such as Ancestry.com, FindMyPast, and others, and while the information from those sites may show up in a search or index, the links to those sites aren’t always to free images);

Jami Mills: What do you need to get started in a genealogical quest?

Genie Weezles: A pen and a piece of paper, or a free genealogy computer program to record your own information, and work backward from there. You’ll need names, dates, and places. Any information you can glean from your family members, starting with the oldest relatives you know. Because of privacy laws and availability of records of living folks, records are more available for people born prior to 1940.

“I can say that Charlemagne is my 23rd great grandfather. But then, so can most folks.”

however, FamilySearch offers all of their own records, images, and information for free.

Jami Mills: In some sense, aren’t we all related? Is that the point?

Genie Weezles: In my opinion it is. Us versus Them starts to become just “Us.” “My ancestors” quickly turns into “Our ancestors.” And personally, I find this translates to less aggravation on the drive home, when I consider that the other drivers, even the annoying ones, may all be my cousins.

Jamil Mills: Are most of the sites free?

Genie Weezles: Internet research has been one of my fortés, and so I can definitely say that most of the genealogy information online is free, but often you need to know how to search creatively to find some of it. There are lots of sites that will want you to pay for information (and sometimes much of that information may be available elsewhere online for free), and several of them do have valuable information worth the price asked - - but even many of the pay sites are available to

access for free from either your local public library or from a FamilySearch Center.

Jamil Mills: How far have you gotten?

Genie Weezles: I can say that Charlemagne is my 23rd great grandfather. But then, so can most folks. Being related to Charlemagne, though, is almost a genealogy inside joke. At one point in time, people would pay someone to create their lineage to royalty, and a lot of that information was recorded, not necessarily with any proof. When someone first starts out researching their family, it is often a numbers game about how many, and how far back. But the more you become involved in the research, the more you realize that the value isn't so much on numbers, as it is on the stories. I'm much more excited (and honored, actually) to share the stories of ancestors that I've found. I've become fascinated with the stories not so much of the "famous" ancestors, as of the everyday folks. Reading a journal written in the 1700s, or family letters from the 1800s, brings people back to life. Records of their lives make them real people, and their trials and successes, their loves and losses, are so often times the same things we are going through ourselves today.

Jami Mills: What is the biggest surprise in terms of an unexpected relation?

Genie Weezles: The biggest surprise was discovering that my great-great grandfather on my mother's side was most likely King Edward VII. Growing up, I always thought my ancestors were "just" farmers from Ohio. I've since discovered that my direct line (great grandparents) were some of the founders and religious leaders of early America, that they were the pioneers, military leaders. But again, one of my more favorite is the 5th great grandmother who cultivated an apple and named it after her husband, Jonathan.

Jami Mills: How reliable are the online search engines?

Genie Weezles: The search engines are great; it's the results that can be sketchy. Online pedigrees are notoriously bad -- some folks will download an entire tree and attach it to their own, and then re-post it online for the next unsuspecting distant family member to do the same with. Source citation (or not) determines whether any information you find anywhere is reliable, or possibly even just plain made up. Genealogy is the only discipline with a handbook on how to write citations, that is about 900 pages long (and it is the genealogy "Bible" so to speak). The closer to the original source that you find, such as actual images of documents, obviously the more reliable the information will be. But then you need to also consider the source of the in-

formation as well. The person filling out the death certificate could get the deceased's birth date wrong. The fellow carving the tombstone could make a typo. But as long as you note the source of every piece of information that you include in your research notes or program, you will be able to defend or weigh your information against other possible facts that may arise at another time.

member volunteering in a genealogy library one time and having a patron storm in, completely enraged that the information she found online about her grandmother was incorrect. In the very next breath she said announced with pleasure, "But I did find a line that goes back to Joan of Arc." You always need to consider the sources of the information, and their reliability. Two people can see the same record, and read it

"You also have to consider that there are limits to the availability of reliable records. Courthouses burned, buildings bombed, and heck, there was this big flood that covered the Earth."

Jami Mills: How far back have you gone in your search?

Genie Weezles: In my own actual research, I remember vividly scrolling through microfilm images of church record books from England that were written in the mid-1500s. That was amazing.

Jami Mills: Is there a point of some absurdity? The writer of the NY Times article said, "My 97th great-grandfather is King David from the Bible."

Genie Weezles: See my previous discussion about Charlemagne ;) I re-

differently. One transcription of an 1800s census showed an elderly woman's occupation as a 'prostitute.' But closer inspection of the actual handwritten document showed that it actually said "prosletyne" - - a missionary! You also have to consider that there are limits to the availability of reliable records. Courthouses burned, buildings bombed, and heck, if you want to go that route, there was this big flood that covered the earth...

Jami Mills: Tell me about Alzheimer's and how it has affected you personally.

Genie Weezles: My grandmother and I

were always close. I named my first child Christine after her. But as my grandmother aged, while she could remember details of her neighbors from 50 years earlier, she had no clue who any of her visitors were -- not her son (my dad), not me. But she always recognized Christine when she visited.

Jami Mills: How can our readers help rid this planet of this scourge?

Genie Weezles: Just being aware of the disease is a start. Learn about what the possible causes are, what possible steps may be taken to prevent it, or to slow its onset. And, of course, donate when possible to research efforts to find a preventative and a cure. The author, AJ Jacobs, has taken on both genealogy and Alzheimer's in his current project, and on June 6, he'll be holding what may well be the world's largest "family reunion" in New York City, with branch parties held at locations around the world, as well as in Second Life, in the Just Genealogy area. AJ became fascinated with the idea that we are all related and the way that this knowledge might lead to a kinder, more peaceful world. The Global Family Reunion is his celebration of just that, the global family, and all profits will be donated to the Alzheimer's Research foundation. [AJ is, by the way, really excited about our Second Life branch party!] Thank you for the opportunity to share this info, Jami.

* * * * *

So, if any of our readers' curiosity is piqued by this article, or if you already were interested in genealogy but just needed a little encouragement to get started (or continue) on your own genealogical quest, there are many resources available to you, both online and in the metaverse. Putting your own family tree together can be an invigorating, fascinating voyage across the centuries, as Genie and Barbara will attest. While most of you won't have a Second Life family tree to speak of (although from the size of some of the families in SL, there are a few who could put together at least a broad, if not tall, tree), the Just Genealogy sim is a valuable inworld resource where you can get information and personal assistance in researching your own real life history. And don't be disappointed to learn that you are not related to Charlemagne, either. I heard he was a bit of a cad, actually. Doubtless there are other great personages that will make you just as proud.

Thank you, Genie and Barbara, and we'll see you and all our other SL cousins at Just Genealogy on June 6th. In the meantime, you might just want to pull out that family Bible and see if it stimulates an interest in genealogy.

• r — e — z •

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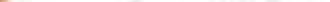
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h o t o g r a p h y
j a m i m i l l s

Murder: Rated (Part Deux)

by Harry



dPG

y Bailey



Friday and I recapped the three needs for any murder case, motive, opportunity, and means.

Means we had down cold; the cause of death was in no doubt: the black patent leather BAX with only Sedona's and our victim's prints on it.

Opportunity - - we had at least 30 avatars in close proximity to the deceased just prior to the murder, all wearing masks and having just taken off their banana skins as part of a group dance event.

So far, we found no one who saw anything, although Sedona was there, and her prints were on the weapon. But then one could usually find her prints

on anything leather, anywhere in SL.

Now, motives we had aplenty. Jealous lover(s), jealous sister, revenge for the potential disappearance of good old dad, inheritance of the club if dad was in fact deceased, or even robbery if the victim had any Lindens on her when she came into the club. No Lindens or jewelry were found on the body.

I sent Friday over to talk with Sedona again about her vast boot collection, hoping that Friday might jog Sed's memory, and that she might remember a bit more about what she saw on that dance floor. I was just not buying 30 plus dancers, and still no one claiming to remember who was there that night. A dance floor of walk-off witnesses was



just not going to cut it on this investigation.

Once Friday was on her way, I decided to get more info on Goody, as well as some of the other players in this trail of missing clues. I checked the picks list again, and headed over to Mojo. I had a connection with a guy I had interviewed a few years back. DJ named Hy, who I figured would walk a straight line with me.

Pulling the Edsel into a slot along the beach, I spotted Hy over by the bar. "Fit me up with a Jack on the rocks," I said slipping down on a bar stool. Hy materialized the drink and sat down. "So, what can I do for you, Harry? Don't usually see you around here during the day." I gave Hy the Cliff's notes version of the case, and asked him if he had any insight into Goody, her sister, her dad, or the three guys who had been overheard arguing over her "Charms."

"Well, I didn't know her well, but she could occasionally be spotted hoofing it with one fellow or another over by the piano during my sets. I've seen her here with a lot of guys, but never any regulars. As for the three fellows you mentioned, Less, Stu, and Lefty, yeah I know of 'em. Totally harmless if you ask me. In fact, those three couldn't pour water out of a BAX boot if the instructions were printed on the heel! I always referred to them mentally as Les

A'more, Stu Dmuffin, and Lefty Alone. They would always argue over who the girl would go for - - like any of them had any chance! I think you are wasting your shoe leather if you chase after any of them for this.

There was no way Sedona could have been involved either. I think she owns half the boots in SL, and if you haven't toured her closet, you should go over and take a look. I can also attest to the fact that she often "loses" her clothes, and even shoes and boots during a hot night at any club. Iso and I are always picking up after her when she hosts here on Friday nights with me. Actually, I'm amazed she even made it over to Crystal with her boots."

I looked Hy in the eye and gave him the sixty-four thousand linden question, "So, if you are eliminating my best suspects, who do you think might have done this deed?" Hy took a swallow of his scotch and thought about this for a while. "Well, that bartender over at the other club sure led you astray with those three guys as suspects. I presume you were talking to Gus Knockdown, the guy with the face that looks like it was left over from an old Dick Tracy cartoon?" I nodded an affirmation of his facts, as he went on.

"That fellow spent way too many rounds in the ring, but he's sharper than he looks. Last time I saw Goody's

dad, Randy, he was telling me that he was going to have to have a "conversation" with Gus. Seems the figures from the till weren't adding up. That was about a day, maybe two before Randy went missing. You know that the two girls changed their names, I suppose?"

In point of fact, Friday and I had not discovered this key fact. I let Hy go on. "Randy Natured had just the two girls, Good Natured and Gree D Natured. Good changed to Goody Twoshoes a long time ago, and Gree D changed hers to Jane Dough - - as in "I can't ever get enough." Strange family, if you ask me - - and you did!" Now I got to get to work. Good luck with your sleuthing, and bring yer dancin' shoes over any chance you get."

Heading the Edsel back over to the office, I sat down with Friday and considered these new facts. It now seemed our primary suspect just might be the bartender, Buddy, or more probably, Jane; or should I call her Gree D, I wondered? Friday had gotten nothing more than a mile hike through Sedona's shoe closet, and yet more assertions of her innocence. This time, however, she did seem to recall taking off her boots halfway through either a Joe Bonamassa or Enigma song. Friday had crossed-checked this fact with her dance partner, who confirmed her story, and also wanted to know if she could borrow the boots once the in-

vestigation was over before we returned them to Sedona's inventory.

As we mulled these facts, Friday noticed a shadow coming up the stairs to our lush offices over the boxing ring (the rent's cheap ... the cigars cheaper). Since this region of SL was lightly populated, we waited in silence for the inevitable knock on the door, as cigar smoke filtered overhead. I stepped over and opened the door as Friday made mental notes on our female visitor. A prolonged silence filled the air, along with the cigar smoke. Finally, our visitor spoke. "Are you Noir the PI? Gus, the bartender over at Red House, said ya wanted to talk to me about my sister. What trouble has she gotten herself into this time?"

I ushered her over to one of our "plush" vintage 1949 era hard-backed oak school teacher chairs, and once she was "comfortably" settled, I leaned across and locked into eye contact with her, so I could drill into her soul and hold her feet to the fire, so to speak. When she blinked, I opened the interrogation. "Hard for a corpse to cause much trouble unless you consider the stir she caused down at the Morgue." As I finished that comment and it sank in, I saw our guest - - obviously Jane Dough - - go pale, as a look of total shock came over her face. This was either one cool cucumber or one amazing actress! This gal was more of a Pillsbury dough

boy than a cucumber, and from what I had heard from Gus, she wasn't much in the acting department.

Friday was giving me a look that said she not only had read my thoughts, but also agreed with them, as she moved over to place a soft hand on Jane's shoulder, and then spoke to her. "Jane, I'm sorry we didn't realize you hadn't heard about your sister's death. It happened Friday night." At first, Jane appeared tongue tied but finally she whispered, "But how did it happen?" Jane began to gush, as her emotions now mingled with the smoke. The air was getting stale. Her voice began to shake as she continued, "I mean, I was there at the dance with her Friday night, and we were having a great time. She needed it after the awful week she was having. First she heard our Dad had his account pulled by the Lindens for running too many Adult houses and questionable sims. Then all those men having that terrible fight over which one was "her guy." Not one of them even had the decency to invite her out to dance. Then, even after I tried to stop her, she went to that gaming sim and lost a bundle playing 'sploder for hours. I thought TGIF would brighten her spirits and she seemed to be having such a great time. At least until she spotted those hot black leather boots Sedona was wearing."

Both Friday and I snapped our necks like Budweiser Clydesdales hearing the call of a beer wagon, as we turned in unison to stare at Jane. "What about the boots?" I asked simply. Jane's tears began to gush, as she sniffed and tried to go on. "Well, she really wanted those boots, and had been going to get the fatpack in every color until she lost all that dough at the 'sploder. I would have bought them for her if I had the Lindens, but one of us had to pay the rent ya know. Anyway, she couldn't take her eyes off of them. When Sedona kicked them off after slipping on that other babe's banana peel after that Joe Bonamassa song, just at the start of Bananaphone, Goody's eyes glazed over and she could do nothing but stare at those boots just lying there on the floor!" Friday cut in, as the tension filled the room that not even the cigar smoke could cut through.

"So, what did your sister do about those boots?" Crying completely now, Jane whispered "She, sheeee, <Sniff> she slipped across the dance floor after those appealing boots, and split for the safety of those flowers in the planter. The last thing I saw of her, she was leaping over the planter wall with one boot hugged to her chest, and the other dangling from her other hand, as she tried to keep from dropping it! The banana peels weren't helping. I heard her hit that flowerbed like a cream pie, and then embarrassed, I split that banana





republic and went home. The whole week had been awful, and now you tell me Goody is dead. Obviously, a horrible accident caused by her greed and those damned hot leather boots!"

Just then, the phone rang. Friday grabbed it and I heard her "...Yes, no, no, really, yes I understand, so that's it then. Huh, ok fine." Our eyes met and she filled me in. "That was Skinny from the morgue. Seems we forgot to go over the crime scene completely. Skinny got the pictures of the scene back, and something showed up. He found a perfect face plant of our victim's kisser in the flower bed with a matching BAX boot print right where it should have been, but with a twist ... her knuckle prints were under the boot, like she had it clutched to her chest for dear life! Skinny says it looks to him like she impaled herself on that boot with one final bargain basement markdown sale plunge!"

Friday and I looked across the desk at each other and realized that while Goody and Jane had been through a booty shaking week, it was now over and there had been no murder. The ME had been right to keep the accidental death option open, and our victim had simply leaped onto the heel of that sky-high BAX spike. While not a Broadway Tony award winning musical, this too was a *Kinky Boots* tale for the books.



Later, after we had gotten Jane home, and let Gus and her friends at Red House know to keep an eye on her, Friday and I went back to the office to lace up the details, and clean up the loose ends. We IM'd our report notecard to Fedora for his files, with a warning to be a bit more careful about his playlist, especially *Bananaphone* and *Cows with*



Guns.

We let Skinny the ME know that he could return the boots to Sedona Mills, and most importantly, we divided up what was left of those \$25,000L that had been occupying our safe. As we finished, Friday looked up at me and said, "You know, as gum-shoes, we should have realized right off that here

in SL, it's always about the shoes!" I grimaced at her comment and replied, "Yeah, it looks like Ms. Twoshoes wasn't murdered - - she just needed to be "rebooted"!"

• r — e — z •



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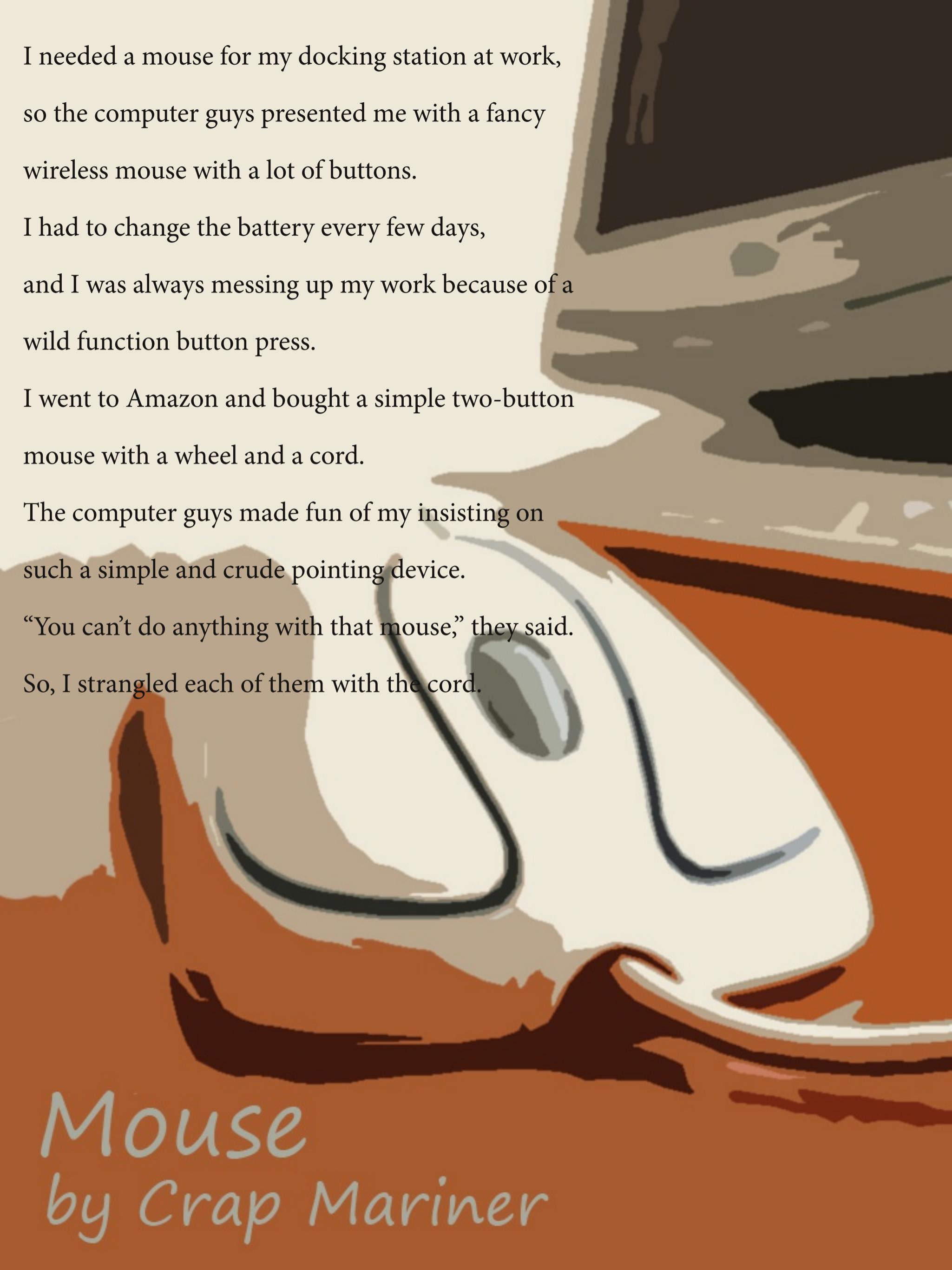
I needed a mouse for my docking station at work,
so the computer guys presented me with a fancy
wireless mouse with a lot of buttons.

I had to change the battery every few days,
and I was always messing up my work because of a
wild function button press.

I went to Amazon and bought a simple two-button
mouse with a wheel and a cord.

The computer guys made fun of my insisting on
such a simple and crude pointing device.

“You can’t do anything with that mouse,” they said.
So, I strangled each of them with the cord.



Mouse
by Crap Mariner

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